

VZCZCXRO0196

PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLH RUEHLD RUEHLZ

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DE RUEHAA #0326 0701141

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P 101141Z MAR 08

FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0410

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 0260

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3483

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1301

RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY 0069

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0028

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1168

RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 1737

RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000326

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EEB

PLEASE PASS TO USTDA DAN STEIN

ENERGY FOR EKIMOFF/THOMPSON

COMMERCE FOR HUEPER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EPET](#) [EAID](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: FIRST PHASE OF USTDA TRAINING A
BIG SUCCESS

¶11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶12. (U) Two officials from Turkmenistan's State Agency for Management and Use of Hydrocarbon Resources, including the deputy and another high-ranking official, were extremely enthusiastic about the just-completed first phase of USTDA training. The two officials on March 5 told the USTDA contractor who had carried out a definitional mission for Turkmenistan's hydrocarbon agencies that the training had more than met their expectations. If anything, the program was "too large" in scope. Officials look forward to learning more -- and in greater depth -- in follow-on phases. They commented that the instructors were solid, reputable and knowledgeable, adding with appreciation that the instructors had followed up and answered every question, even though in some cases they had been unable to respond to questions outside their immediate purview until after they had returned home and researched the answer. Even when urged not to be "polite," the two officials (both of whom had participated in the first-phase training) failed to come up with anything other than very minor, cosmetic-style suggestions for improvement.

¶13. (U) According to the officials, the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) lecture was very well received, and they said that it was helpful learning more about how Platts sets energy prices, since the State Agency uses Platts for production sharing agreement (PSA) negotiations. But, they added, futures contract prices are fairer than Platts prices, since Platts bases its prices on only one or two shipments. They then proceeded to follow and participate intelligently in a technical discussion with the consultant on the best Platts price to use when calculating a fair price for

Turkmenistan's gas. The consultant suggested that it might be helpful for the officials attending the next phase of training to visit Platts in New York to better understand what factors Platts relies on in setting energy prices.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: The USTDA training is continuing to receive top marks from participants -- including from State Agency Executive Director Muradov, who sat in on several of the training sessions. The best yardstick to measure the program's success, however, is the fact that these officials managed to hold their own in the March 5 discussion on setting energy prices. Just a few weeks ago, they would have become lost in this conversation. And, although we have heard that some participants did better than others in sessions, our impression is that the training overall was right on the mark. While even State Agency officials acknowledge that they still need a lot more training before they will feel comfortable going head-to-head with experts who have been at this game much longer than they have, they now seem to have a much better sense of what they know -- and what they don't -- and where to go for the answers they need.

END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND